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The MASTER'S VOICE

A DRAMA IN THREE ACTS

By
MAI PIPES

Author of "The White Wolf"
"The King's Wish"
"The Fairy Well"

MAI PIPES, Author and Publisher

4613 N. Kedzie Avenue Chicago, Illinois

1915

"The White Wolf"

A Fairy Play in Two Acts

By MAI PIPES

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CAST

THE ROYAL MOTHER

LITTLE PRINCESS EUNICE

LYGIA, Her Nurse

THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS

MARTA, a Slave

MARTHA, Principle Christian.

INEZ
ANN
MYRIAM
} Christians

CECELIA, Mistress of the Lions

AMRAH
NERVA
NAZARIE
PSYLLIA
POPPEE
} Favorite Slaves to Royal Mother

TIRZA
ESTHER
IRAS
} Slaves of Eunice

Slaves, Attendants, Dancing Girls, Christians, Populace.

THE MASTER'S VOICE

ACT ONE.

Scenery: Fountain playing and flowers about low wall of pool. Court of the Palace. Music soft and low.

(*Enter little Princess, sandals, white gown, and gold—dove upon finger.*) Ah, my pretty dove, I love thee — fly, fly away. (*Throws kiss from tip of fingers—laughingly looks about—stage in blue lights—one attendant asleep near pool.*)

Little Princess Eunice. My good Marta, sleep closes thine eyes. The Palace waits upon my Royal Mother, and Eunice may dance and laugh, for there are none to frown upon her, in this hour.

(*Goes to pool, throws up the sparkling drops — laughs a happy laugh.*) Ah, how thou dost sparkle, crystal drops, like diamonds in the sun. (*Runs up stage, looks about — then down — and off with sandals. As toes touch water a merry laugh.*) Ah, thou art so cool (*laughs*) woe is me if my Royal Mother comes upon me thus. (*Dance in bare-feet with garland of flowers and end picture by looking into pool—wreath upon head—at almost end of dance, enter unobserved, the Mother with court attendants. Picture about steps and back stage—music ends—silence—Eunice looks about, startled—a picture of loveliness.*)

Eunice. Mother!

Mother. Such actions wait not well upon a Princess of this royal house.

Eunice. Ah, my mother, chide me not—it is from very happiness that I dance. O, it is so good to feel the glad new life bounding through thy veins and the laughter gurgling up into thy throat like prisoned bird beating against the bars of thy lips to be released. (*Looks at her Queen Mother who stands sternly looking upon her.*)

Eunice. (*With winsome way.*) How wondrous fair thou art, my Royal Mother. (*Sighs.*) I would I could be as lovely.

Princess' Mother. (*Smiles and comes down.*) 'Tis well thou knowest how to voice appreciations of my charms. Come (*to slaves*) wait upon me in the court beyond. (*Proudly walks across stage.*)

(*Eunice puts forth her little hands—hungry for love—then drops upon the wall of the pool and sighs and weeps. Enter Nurse.*)

Lygia. Nay, weep not, my sweet Eunice — dost thou not know it cannot always be the summer — there must be the winter — it is then the flowers rest. We are no different from all else that is made—we too must know the warmth of love and the bitter cold of neglect and pain. Come, look up. Let Lygia see the summer of thy smile again.

Enter Slave. Gentle mistress, the fair daughter of the royal house of Jairus draweth nigh.

(*Daughter calls and runs in laughingly.*) Eunice, Eunice. Here I am, sweet damsel.

Eunice. Eunice giveth thee welcome.

Daughter. How glad I am to see thee, my Eunice. I have come for thee if thy Lygia will grant it me.

Eunice. (*Runs with her to opposite side of stage like children—happy—dancing in the sun.*) Nay, I care not why thou hast come, I only know thou art here. I am so happy. I would speak with thee alone. Peace—give me thine ear and the story from thy lips again of thy return to life by the touch of the Master upon thy brow. O telleth me how He looketh once again. It seemeth I could love Him well if I too might but see Him. Thou knowest I have not the freedom to come and go as thou hast. My father's royal wife keepeth me here within these walls—never even to thy house have I permission to go. O, I wish my own sweet mother had not left me so alone. (*Sobs.*)

Daughter. Fair Eunice, I wish I might give to thee my Mother to comfort thee.

Eunice. I know thou art ever good and I love thee well. Now tell me of that Master whom thou lovest.

Daughter. If thou will never tire of that wondrous story, no more will I. Thus my father telleth me: He sayeth that his heart was wrought with anguish when he sought the Master in the multitude to drive from me this illness. As my father waited, a messenger came unto him saying: "Thy daughter is dead." "Why troubleth the Master further?" But my father paid no heed, he looked upon the Man and spake, "My daughter is even now dead, but come, Master, lay thy hand upon

her and she shall live." And Jesus arose and followed him and so did his disciples and when Jesus came unto my father's house and saw the hired mourners, He said unto them, "Why make ye this ado? The maid is not dead, but sleepeth;" and they laughed him to scourn, but when the people were put forth, He taketh my father and mother with Him and entereth in where I was lying and taking my hand in His, spake thus: "Damsel, I say unto thee arise," and straightway I arose and walked, they did say. I know not if this be so, but O, my Eunice, that thrilling touch upon my brow and the wondrous tenderness of that look He gaveth me as He did smile upon me maketh me to love Him with my life.

Eunice. If I might but see Him, too.

Daughter. That is why I have come for thee. So thy wish might be fulfilled. Upon this very day He rideth into Jerusalem; from a housetop we canst see Him if thou canst but gain thy nurse.

Eunice. O daughter of the royal house, it shall be done. (*Calls nurse Lygia.*) Lygia, sweet, sweet Lygia, wilt thou not taketh us to see Him? He rideth into Jerusalem in an hour. This fair damsel didst come to fetch us to Him.

Lygia. Nay, thy royal mother wilt refuse.

Eunice. I careth not. We can slip away unseen. Thou knowest how thou hast taught me to love Him. Thou lovest Him thyself and oft have told me of His works. Canst thou refuse to let me see Him?

Lygia. I fear, I fear. If thy father's wife doth know 'tis certain death. She hateth this Man and all who follow Him and hath poisoned thy father's heart against this great good Man. She loveth thee, my Eunice, not too well, and fear sits upon my heart for thee.

Eunice. I feareth not, good Lygia, take me to where I canst see Him and heareth His Voice and I careth not what may come. Come, sweet Lygia, come.

Lygia. So be it. (*Claps hands; Slaves enter.*) Mantles of darkest fabric. We goeth forth alone and let silence seal thy lips.

Daughter. Sweet Eunice, make ready thy heart with gladness, thou goest forth, at last, to meet Him whom thy soul doth long to see. (*Enter Slaves with cloaks.*)

ACT TWO

Scene I. A Housetop. Enter number of Christians.

Martha. Well met, Lygia, I was coming for thee. (*To Eunice.*) Rejoice greatly, O daughter, of Jerusalem, behold thy King cometh unto thee. (*To others.*) The news hath swept all Bethany. Thus it is that a very great multitude is prepared to receive and welcome the Deliverer who hath raised the dead.

(*Shouts without—off—Hosanna—Hosanna. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.*) Dost hear the shouting Hosanna, Hosanna—'tis a good word that Ho-

sanna—dost see Him there yonder over the Hill of Evil Counsel? They have found a colt and are putting their garments over it to do Him regal honor. Now they have lifted Him upon it—they cometh this way. (*Shouts.*) Hosanna—Hosanna—Hosanna—Hosanna.

Inez, 1st Christian. Look—a little lad hath plucked Him a great branch and thrown it before Him.

Ann, 2nd Christian. It seemeth the multitude doth the same; they are spreading out their garments to tapestry His path and keep tearing down the boughs of Olive and Fig and Walnut to scatter before Him. (*Hosanna—Hosanna.*) (*Nearer.*)

Myriam, 3rd Christian. He looketh like some gentile Prince.

Martha. Nay, He is King and more; hark you the Son of David, for that is what they call Him. (*Shouts—very near.*) (*Hosanna to the Son of David.*)

All on Stage Answer. Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.

All. Hosanna in the highest. Hossanna in the highest.

Lygia. Behold He standeth in the court straight below us and blind men and sick folk and all are crowding about Him and lo, they go forth from Him whole.

Inez. See yonder the chief Priests and Scribes and Pharisees, they but standeth silent with wonderment, gnashing their teeth in their impotence—for they dareth not do aught, they are powerless to do aught, for the whole world hath gone after him.

(*Shouts loud and full—in the adoration of a multitude.*)
Hosanna, Hosanna, to the Son of David. Blessed is the King!

Eunice. Peace, He Speaketh.

(*Hushed the cries and music to low murmur.*)

Eunice. Canst thou heareth—what does He say?

Daughter. Jesus answereth them, saying: "The hour is come. Verily, Verily, I say unto you: He that loveth his life shall lose it and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

Eunice. O, daughter of the royal house, my soul is troubled—what meaneth these words?

Daughter. Peace, he speaketh once again. Come nearer.(*Repeats.*) "If any man serve me, let him follow me and where I am there shall also my servant be. Verily, if any man serve me, let him follow me."

Eunice. But for this came I unto this hour.

(*Repeats.*) "If any man serve me, let him follow me;" my soul is troubled, can it be He meaneth this for me?

All. Hosanna, Hosanna.

Daughter. My Lygia, how wondrous are His words! "While ye have the light, believe in the light—while ye have me, believe in me."

Eunice. (*Troubled and alone.*)

(*Down, right of stage.*)"While ye have me, believe in me." Oh, Lord and Master, wilt the hour ever come when thou

wilt be hidden from our eyes? O, the utter darkness and desolation of that hour. Even the thought beareth me to the earth. Loved Master, give me whatsoever Thou doth wish; take from me whatever seemeth best to Thee; do with me as Thou wilt—only let me too be of that number that loveth Thee above all things, so faithfully and so tenderly.

All. Hosanna, Hosanna, Blessed is the King.

Lygia. Sweet Eunice, come closer to the wall — He hath but lifted a little child up into His arms—see—behold, the eyes of the Man are upon us—He looketh to thee, my Eunice, He stretcheth forth His hand; He smiles upon thee, my child, to thy knees—the King of all Israel speaketh to thee. Open thine heart to the Master's Voice.

(*All on stage.*) Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, Hosanna to the Son of David.

Eunice. (*On knees and hands out, a smile like light upon her face, music wondrous soft and low as she calls clear and low.*) O Master, wilt Thou take me with you.

Voice. (*Wondrous sweet. All listen in awe and wonderment.*) My child, pain is the only portion that e'er I canst give to thee, and sorrow the only blessing. Still, wilt thou come with me?

Eunice. Aye, Master, whither thou goest, I will go and even pain will becometh sweet to me, if I canst bear it for love of Thee.

(*All form cross.*) (*Eunice center, light, and burst of music.*)

ACT TWO

Scene II. The Inner Court of the Palace.

The Princess' Mother in impatience, questions her slaves upon the absence of Eunice.)

Mother. Thou sayest, Amrah, thou knowest not of thy young mistress' whereabouts?

Amrah. No, my Lady, 'twas the seventh hour I didst serve her. From then till now, I have not seen her.

Mother. Nerva, what sayest thou?

Nerva. I knoweth less, my Lady.

Mother. And thou, Nazarie?

Nazarie. I, too, canst but add my silence.

Mother. So, I'll have thee whipped for thy blindness. How oft have I bade thee watch closely the apartments of the daughter of this house? And now from under thy very eyes she hath vanished. To thy punishment I send thee (*claps hands and two slaves appear, the three fall at Princess' Mother's feet.*)

Amrah. Mercy, most gracious Lady.

Nazarie. As thou wilt look for pity, grant it us.

Mother. Bite the dust, thou miserable slaves, I hate thee, away. (*Each slave drags one, Nazarie and Amrah, screaming, off to their torture. Enter a third who clutches Nerva, who throws her off.*)

Nerva. Lay not thy hand upon me, thou clod of earth. (*To Princess' Mother.*) The day is not far off when thou

too wilt cry for mercy, and verily I say unto you, it will be denied thee.

Mother. Peace, away.

Enter Eunice. Come hither, my Lygia, come—all is safe.

(*Mother conceals self.*)

Eunice. (*In ecstasy of happiness.*) O, my Lygia, He speaketh unto me — me. His voice was so wondrous sweet. "Still, wilt thou come with me?" My very being rose up to meet that look of tenderness and now I knoweth that neither death nor life, nor powers, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any fear or creature, canst separate me from Him. Ah, thou art beloved, dear Jesus, and none knoweth how much, for the love of thee is silent and hidden and unseen.

Enter Mother. (*From hiding place.*) All start.

Mother. So, thou too art one of these followers of the Man.

Eunice. (*Comes to her feet.*) O, my mother.

Mother. Lay not thy hand upon me.

Eunice. Nay, mother, hear me. Open wide the gates of thy great soul and let the light enter in. Listen, mother, He spake to me with a voice so marvelously sweet, it was like unto the music of the waters and the air and the birds. He looketh upon me with eyes so full of tenderness my very soul leaped up within me to meet that look. Ah, mother, He is not what they thinketh Him to be. He

looketh not for gold or honor or kingship. His mission is to help and comfort all who come—wilt thou not believe?

Mother. Thou speakest false. He cometh to seek a kingdom, to cheat us of our rightful heritage—I hateth Him, and know this, from infancy, I have hated thee.

Eunice. Mother!

Mother. I did but tolerate thy presence because of thy father's might. He thought I pitied thee and him when thy rightful mother closed her eyes in death. I laughed, poor fool, 'twas this power and his name I craved —all the passing years He hath held me in his check. Now he is old and ill, and all his power within my hand doth rest. Hear me, ever thou hast stood in my way, thou hast robbed me of the first place in thy father's house; thou, not I, wilt carry on his name and hold his lands and slaves; thou wilt one day be mistress of this house and power from me snatch. I hate thee. I hate thee, and now my time hath come. I've waited long; the very thing thy father hateth most, thou art, a follower of this accursed seeker of a Kingdom. O, my fair one, thou wilt make a morsel for my lions and I'll laugh to hear them crunch thy dainty bones. Dost understand? To the lions—thee and all they who art about thee.

Eunice. Mother, what have I ever done to harm thee and to bring forth such hate from thee?

Mother. (*Laughs and calls attendants.*) To the lions.

Eunice. Thou meanest this? (*Looks up into her face.*) O, 'tis horrible—those great beasts that devour a little lamb

so greedily. It meaneth death to send me to them. Mother, they wilt take away the laughter from my lips; no more will I see the dawn or gather up my flowers. My pretty doves will wonder why I calleth not to them. I, O mother, thou canst not mean it so.

(*The royal Lady stands immovable*)

Eunice. (*Looks up and a smile, like light, comes upon her face.*) Did He not say this day: "Verily, he that loseth his life for me shalt find it?" (*Slaves fall at Eunice's feet sobbing.*)

Eunice (*is aroused and looks upon them with pity.*) Nay, do not make that grief over me—know I love thee all; take care of my doves, Psyllia, and you Poppee. Lady Mother, know my heart is filled with sorrow for thee, for only sorrow canst come from what thou hast done to me and I would that He might look upon thee too and make thee not afraid.

ACT THREE

Five days later. Another room in the Palace.
(*Enter nurse with Eunice in her arms*).

Have pity on us, thou our Beloved; they have struck to her death my sweet flower. All the glory of her childhood, all the gladness of her youth. (*All about Eunice.*) Looketh upon us, O Son of David, for whom this child hath given so much. (*Eunice opens her eyes, speaks.*)

Eunice. Peace, be still. (*Smile upon her lips as words of song come to her dulling ears.*) How beautiful, but whence this darkness. I can scarce see thy face, my Lygia. Let me lay close to thee—so—in thy arms—till everything fadeth away.

Lygia. Pity, O beloved, pity. Suffer us to loveth thee above all else and maketh even death unutterable joy.

Enter Esther. (*Quickly, from rear stage, whisper to other two slaves, Iras and Tirza.*)

Esther. How is it with her.

Iras. (*Covers her face with mantle and moans upon knees*) Alas, unless a change comes, she cannot last till sunrise.

Esther. Is there no power that can save her?

Tirza. Alas none; all that could be done to give back life to our broken flower hath been done; not one of this house but would layeth down his life for her.

Cecelia. (*Steals up to group unawares.*) Aye, thou art right. Woe is me. Curse this hand that mixed the poison, for it madeth it not deadly enough.

All. Poison, what meanest thou, Cecelia?

Cecelia. (*Laughs—scorn.*) So thinkest thou our royal Lady's lions did drop and gasp and die from merest accident? (*All look at one another.*)

Iras. (*Placing finger upon Cecelia's lips*) Peace, more softly, if thou wouldst not die thyself.

Esther. Speak what thou knowest, good Cecelia.

Cecelia. (*Laughs; hands to heart.*) Aye, because my heart doth break when my gentle mistress is no more. Ye are like the rest; ye thought 'twas some strange power that didst rob the lions of their strength to do their ghastly work. Ye thought 'twas mercy from your Empress' hand that let ye take our sweet mistress, crushed and broken, but still with the spark of life within her, away from that den of horror. Ye are wrong. Twas I, I, who made it so. Since the day I didst become the mistress of the lions, I hated and feared them with my life. They wert as cruel and cunning as the Princess who ruleth them. She I feared as much as they. See these marks upon my shoulder? (*All shudder.*) 'Tis where her jeweled hand didst lay so heavily upon me that it maketh me to scream with pain. On that day our lovely Eunice heard my cry and cameth to beg me for herself. Being denied, she bade me serve her royal mother with gentleness, to forgive, and saying she didst love me, left me to tears. Many days have come and gone since then, but my love and my life was hers. When I didst hear the sentence, the awful death, that jealousy and rage had apportioned out, something here didst break within me and all the hatred welled up within my soul. I fed my royal mistress and her royal beasts, all with their favorite feast and laughed as I saw the light fade from her eyes, her lips cry out in anguish, even as she was waiting and watching for the torture of my sweet flower. O woe is me, that I maketh not the poison deadly enough to kill on the instant, e'er they struck down the sweet life that is the light of our eyes. (*Groans and falls upon her face.*)

(*Esther, Iras and Tirza stoop to pick up Cecelia and comfort her.*)

Esther. Peace, Cecelia, Peace, thou canst not have her now.

Tirza. (*Looks about, goes up stage, whisper.*) Whence this darkness?

Iras. Is not this the day of the great crucifixion? Hold who cometh here? They bringeth news of it.

(*Enter three or four Christians, crushed and beaten with sorrow, call to Lygia, who leaves the sleeping Eunice.*)

Martha. It is over, Lygia, they have crucified Him. Two others with Him—on either side one—Jesus in their midst. Since the first watch I have been waiting with the rest on Calvary; now it is over. The soldiers when they had crucified Him, took His garments and cast lots for them and mocked Him and gave Him a sponge with vinegar and put it to His mouth, saying: "If thou be King of the Jews, save thyself." At the foot of the cross of Jesus, stood His mother and they whom they call the Magdalene, and they were weeping, and it was about the sixth hour. Then came a darkness over the earth—the sun was darkened, and the earth trembled and shook, and Jesus crieth: "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." Then with one last great effort He spaketh once again, saying: "It is finished."

Eunice. (*Awakens, speaks.*) O, beloved Jesus, what is my little pain to thy agony on Calvary? The suffering innocence of Thee shameth my very soul. Lygia.

Lygia. Aye, I am here, my Eunice.

Eunice. Behold, He standeth there. A vast multitude is about Him. They singeth His praise — see. He stretcheth forth His hand to me. O, His voice is so wondrous sweet. Dost hear? (*Smiles and puts forth her hand to take His.*) Yea, Master, I love thee, O take me, too.

(*Voice soft and wondrous sweet. Off stage.*) "Verily, I say unto you: He that loseth his life for me shalt find it. This day shalt thou walk with me in Paradise."

Cecelia, at the feet of Eunice.

Picture.

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